



H1N1 Partner and School Briefing

Date: November 24, 2009
To: All Rhode Islanders
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: Information on H1N1 and school-based vaccination clinics in Rhode Island

Local Influenza Activity Level: Widespread¹; H1N1 predominant circulating strain

Rhode Island²: 319 hospitalized cases, 8 deaths

Sentinel Surveillance (% of visits due to influenza-like illness)³: Rhode Island: 9.52%, New England Region: 12.58%, Nation: 5.14%

Travel when you feel well

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched a public awareness campaign to help travelers stay healthy this flu season. To stay healthy during the holiday season:

- Travel only when you are feeling well.
- Wash your hands often.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve.
- Get vaccinated for the flu (both seasonal and H1N1, once it becomes available to you).

People with the flu or flu-like illness should wait to travel until they have been fever-free (temperature less than 100.4°F/38°C) for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. If people get sick while traveling, they should wait to travel home until they are well.

More information for travelers, including guidance on studying abroad during flu season and possible international screening requirements, is available at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/content/novel-h1n1-flu.aspx>.

H1N1 vaccination clinic for pregnant and post-partum women

The Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) of Care New England will host an H1N1 vaccination clinic for pregnant women and women up to six months post-partum on Saturday November 28. The clinic will run from 9:00 a.m. until noon at the agency's office at 51 Health Lane in Warwick, which is on the campus of Kent Hospital. Pre-registration is not required for this clinic. South County and Westerly Hospitals will hold additional vaccination clinics for pregnant and post-partum women in the beginning of December. The dates and times of these clinics will be communicated as they become available.

GlaxoSmithKline Canadian H1N1 vaccine recall

The vaccine manufacturer GlaxoSmithKline has asked the **Canadian** government to stop using vaccine doses from one particular shipment because of allergic reactions reported among people vaccinated from this shipment. **The recalled vaccine is neither licensed nor used in the United States.**

Public seasonal flu vaccination clinic at South County Hospital

South County Hospital will hold a public **seasonal** flu vaccination clinic for adults on Saturday November 28 from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. in its Potter Conference Center. The vaccine is free for Rhode Island residents age 19

¹ Rhode Island reported widespread activity for the week of November 15 to November 21, 2009. Influenza is circulating in all 5 regions of the state. For details see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/surveillance/>.

² Confirmed and probable H1N1 hospitalizations and deaths since September 1, 2009

³ Influenza-like illness activity reported by 27 sentinel surveillance sites from November 8 to November 14, 2009

and older who carry any type of Rhode Island health insurance coverage. Proof of health insurance coverage must be presented to receive the vaccine for free. For all others, the cost of the vaccination is \$30, which can be paid by check or cash.

Flu information and recommendations for seniors

The Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) has developed updated flu-related information and recommendations for senior citizens. In Rhode Island, it is expected that the H1N1 vaccine will be available to seniors in mid-January at public clinics. Actions that seniors can take to stay healthy this flu season include getting their seasonal flu and pneumonia vaccines and seeking medical advice quickly if they develop flu symptoms. For more information and recommendations, see:

<http://www.health.ri.gov/news/H1N1Advisories/H1N1VaccinationInformationForSeniors.pdf>.

Flu prevention in the workplace

HEALTH has developed a brief guidance document for employees on preventing flu in the workplace. Actions employees can take to stay healthy this flu season include practicing good personal hygiene, keeping work areas clean, staying home if they are sick, and getting the H1N1 vaccine once it becomes available. To download or print the full guidance, see

<http://www.health.ri.gov/news/H1N1Advisories/FluPreventionInTheWorkplace.pdf>.

H1N1 vaccination clinics for young adults (ages 19 through 24)

HEALTH will hold H1N1 vaccination clinics in the coming month for young adults ages 19 through 24. An individual's current college enrollment status will determine which of these clinics he or she should attend. Clinics for young adults who are currently enrolled in a Rhode Island college or university have been scheduled to start in the first week of December and run through December 18. Clinics on residential campuses will take place first, followed by clinics on campuses with no student housing. Vaccine will be available later for young adults who reside in Rhode Island but who are enrolled in out-of-state colleges and universities or who are not currently enrolled in a college or university. More information will be provided in upcoming briefings.

H1N1 vaccination clinic for Rhode Islanders in out-of-state schools (K-12)

On Saturday December 12, HEALTH will run an H1N1 vaccination clinic for Rhode Islanders in grades kindergarten through 12 who attend out-of-state schools. Parents and guardians must pre-register their children for this clinic. An online enrollment system is available on HEALTH's website (www.health.ri.gov). Clinic enrollment will close at 4:00 p.m. on December 2. The daylong clinic will run at a central, easily accessible location in Rhode Island. This location and the clinic's times of operation will be announced on HEALTH's website and through the media during the first week of December. For more information about this clinic, see: <http://www.ri.gov/press/view/10184>.

H1N1 school-based clinic vaccine uptake

During the first fourteen days of HEALTH's 28-school-day H1N1 school-based vaccination program 58,452 school-aged children have received the H1N1 vaccine. Of the students enrolled in schools that hosted clinics during this time period, 75% received the vaccine.

School-based H1N1 vaccination clinic best practices

Sound planning and good clinic management have helped all of HEALTH's daytime and evening school-based vaccination clinics run smoothly. Many clinic organizers have advised HEALTH of specific best practices that worked at their sites.

Daytime Clinics:

- Arrange for a substitute school nurse teacher to handle students' routine health issues.
- If additional H1N1 Vaccination Teams assist at your school, avoid overcrowding the observation area by pacing vaccine administration.
- Ensure that students leave observation areas promptly after their 15 minutes of observation pass and don't loiter.

- Provide an adequate number of chairs in the observation area.
- Have the day's list of absences at registration tables. This will ensure that only students who are officially present for the day will be vaccinated and will prevent clinic organizers from having to search for absent students who had returned consent forms in advance.
- Set aside one or more staff members without specific assignments. They can troubleshoot.
- Use stickers or stamps to identify students who are registered for their vaccinations.
- Keep school staffers who answer parents' phone calls updated about clinic plans and policies.
- Recruit as many parent volunteers as possible.
- Keep stretchers out of site.
- Be prepared with water for volunteers.

Evening Clinics:

- **Communicate to parents plans to stagger vaccinations (e.g. "Children with last names beginning with the letters A through G will be vaccinated between 4 and 5:30 p.m.").**
- Arrange for adequate security in your clinic's registration area, vaccine administration area and outside of your school. Security outside of your school will help address traffic-flow issues.
- Establish a separate area to vaccinate hysterical or disruptive children.
- Shield children who are awaiting vaccination from children who are receiving their shots.
- Provide an activity for children to keep them calm and occupied during their 15-minute observation periods.
- Arrange tables, chairs and wastebaskets in the vaccine administration area before Rhode Island Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) members arrive.
- Use stickers or stamps to identify students who are registered for their vaccinations to distinguish them from siblings or other children who do not attend your school.
- Have ample school staff to register students. This will ensure an orderly registration process. In addition, familiar faces are comforts to both parents and students.
- Provide clear signage outside and inside of your school that will direct parents to specific areas.
- Be prepared with enrollment rosters at your registration tables.

Resources

- HEALTH at <http://www.health.ri.gov>;
- Archived partner briefings and regular news updates: <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/flu/>
- H1N1 Information Line (M-F 8:30am- 4:30pm) 401-222-8022
- H1N1 email address h1n1@health.ri.gov
- <http://www.flu.gov>